

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Subject areas



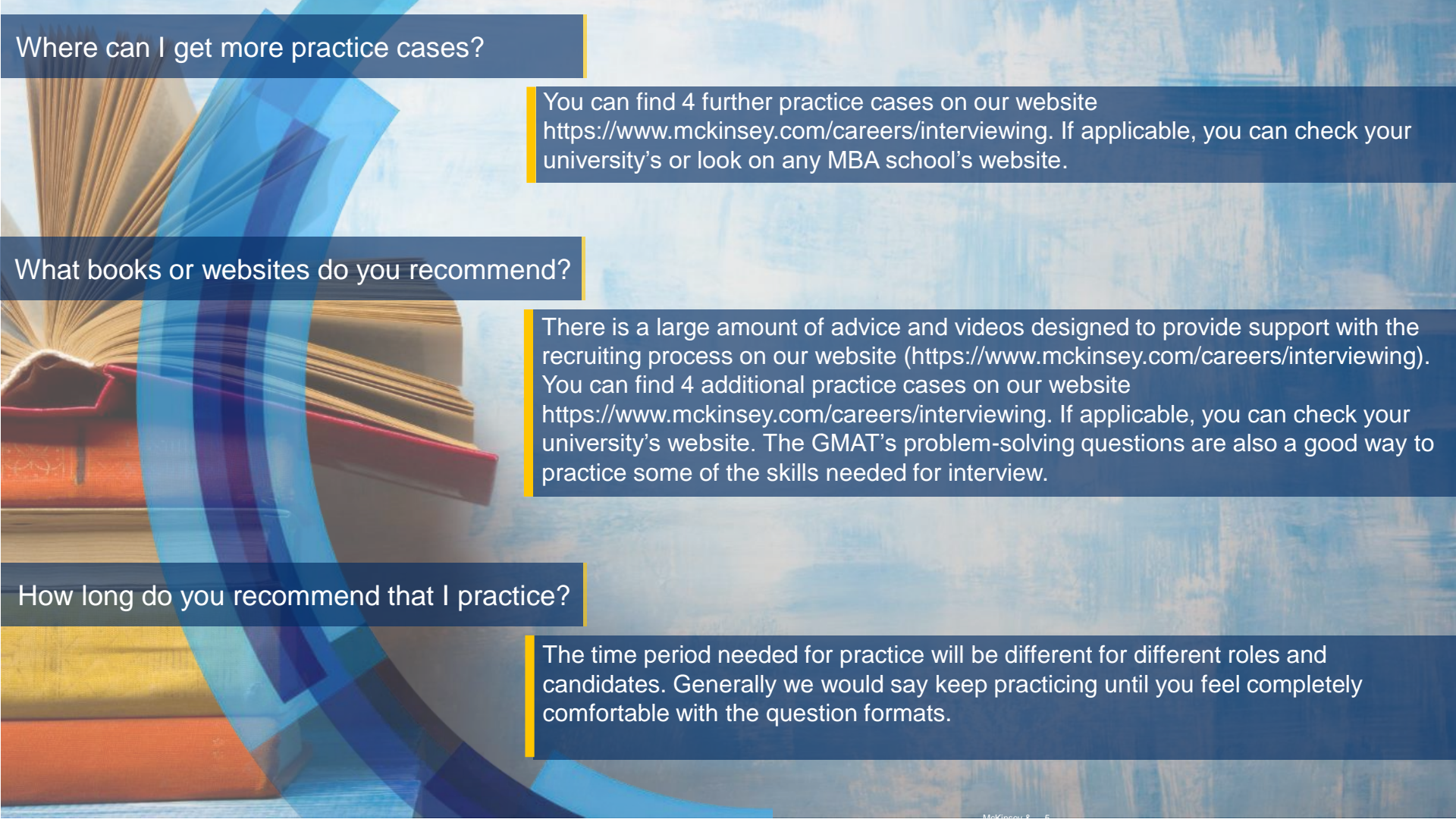
> Preparation

Recruiting process questions

Maths

Practices

Case mechanics



Where can I get more practice cases?

You can find 4 further practice cases on our website <https://www.mckinsey.com/careers/interviewing>. If applicable, you can check your university's or look on any MBA school's website.

What books or websites do you recommend?

There is a large amount of advice and videos designed to provide support with the recruiting process on our website (<https://www.mckinsey.com/careers/interviewing>). You can find 4 additional practice cases on our website <https://www.mckinsey.com/careers/interviewing>. If applicable, you can check your university's website. The GMAT's problem-solving questions are also a good way to practice some of the skills needed for interview.

How long do you recommend that I practice?

The time period needed for practice will be different for different roles and candidates. Generally we would say keep practicing until you feel completely comfortable with the question formats.



How can I practice if I don't have any friends who know case interviews?

Ask a relative or a colleague/member of your university, if applicable, to help you (for example, members of your university's consulting club could be of great help). Being the "interviewer" with the book should be an easy role for most. You could also buddy up with another candidate – ask your recruiter.

I'm a (doctor, lawyer, engineer) - is it possible for someone like me to learn this?

You don't need a business background to succeed at McK - more than one-third of McK consultants don't have business degrees. For basic business themes perhaps spend a few weeks reading local business news (e.g., BBC Business News, Wall Street Journal) and The Economist. Beyond that, depending on the role you apply for, the process will focus on different aspects of your knowledge or abilities. The fact that we have invited you for an interview means we believe you have the right abilities for the role.

Which frameworks should I memorize or learn?

You do not need to learn any frameworks by heart. Parroting frameworks often leads to trying to force them on inappropriate cases and can actually be detrimental.



What business concepts, vocabulary, equations, acronyms should I learn?

For basic business themes perhaps spend a few weeks reading local business news (e.g., BBC News or Wall Street Journal) and The Economist. Beyond that, depending on the role, the process will focus on different aspects of your knowledge or abilities.

Do I need to be able to calculate?

The level of maths you need to prepare for the interview is similar to high school level. A good way to practice is by looking at the GMAT test materials.

How should I prepare for PST, PEI, etc.?

Practice to be confident with them, like practicing for any other test. Check out the "Getting ready for your interviews" videos on our website (<https://www.mckinsey.com/careers/interviewing>) which describes the elements of our interview process and provides guidance on how to prepare.

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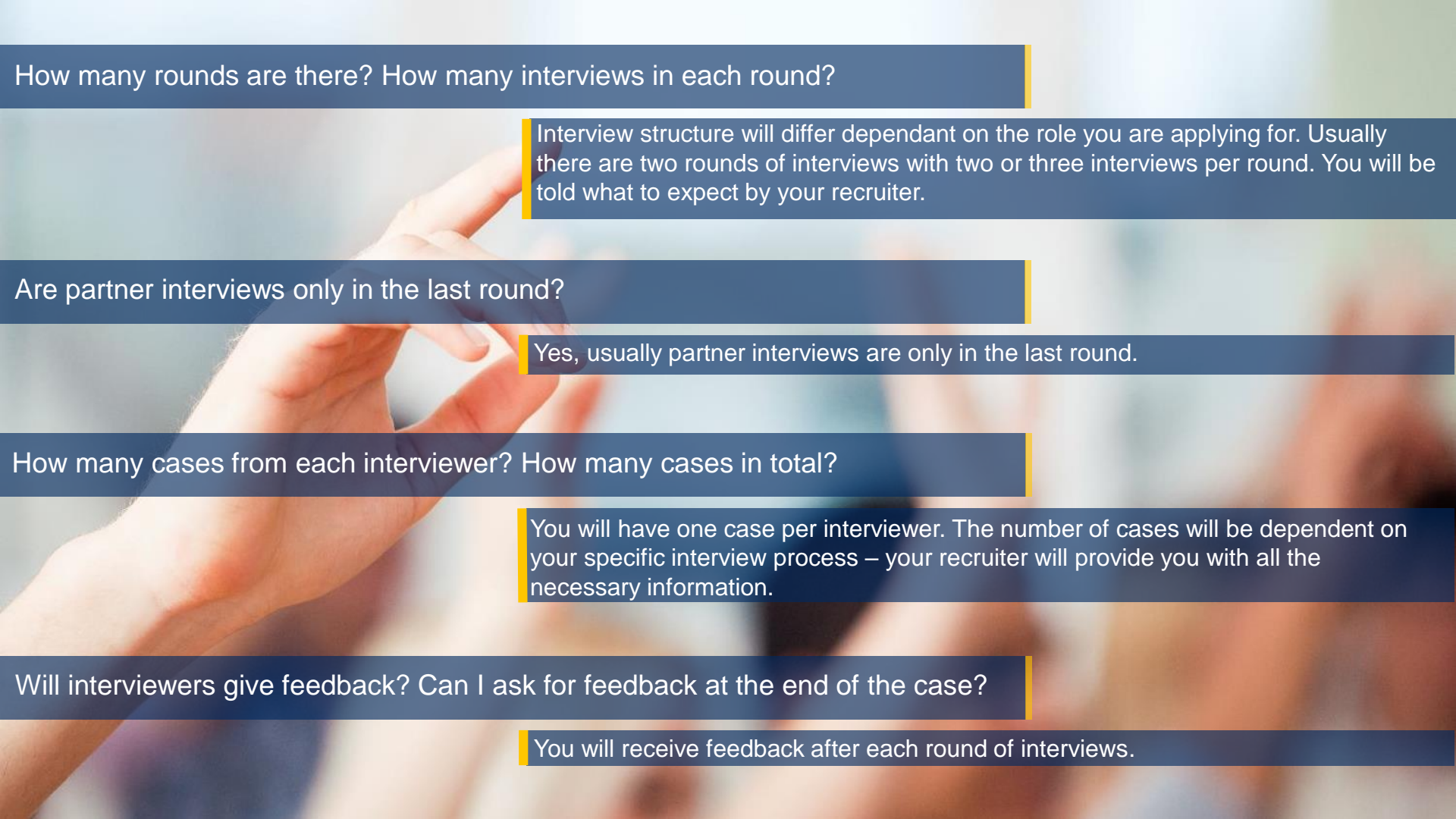
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A close-up, slightly blurred background image of a person's hand holding a pen, positioned as if about to write. The hand is in the lower-left foreground, and the background shows other people out of focus.

How many rounds are there? How many interviews in each round?

Interview structure will differ dependant on the role you are applying for. Usually there are two rounds of interviews with two or three interviews per round. You will be told what to expect by your recruiter.

Are partner interviews only in the last round?

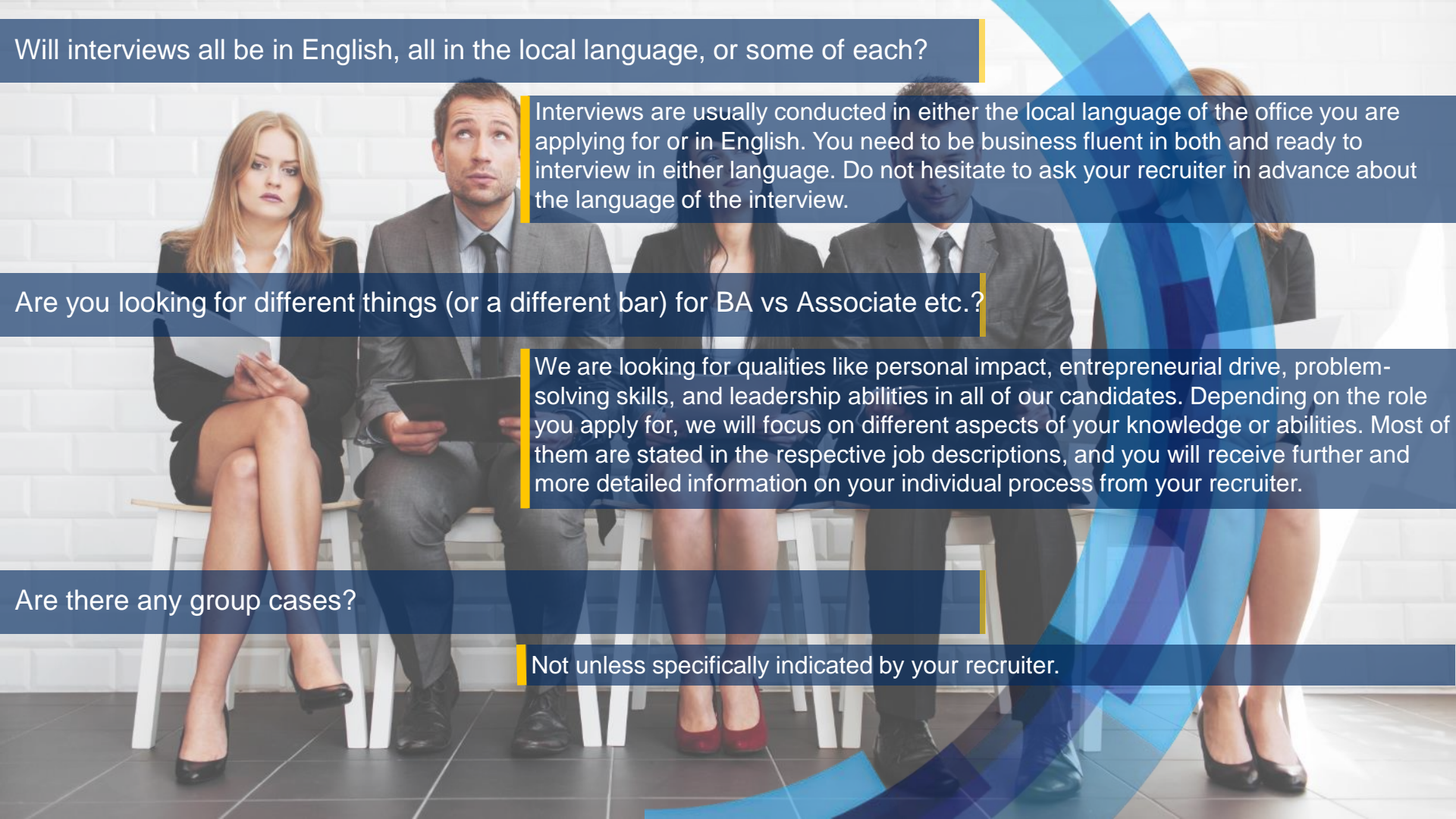
Yes, usually partner interviews are only in the last round.

How many cases from each interviewer? How many cases in total?

You will have one case per interviewer. The number of cases will be dependent on your specific interview process – your recruiter will provide you with all the necessary information.

Will interviewers give feedback? Can I ask for feedback at the end of the case?

You will receive feedback after each round of interviews.



Will interviews all be in English, all in the local language, or some of each?

Interviews are usually conducted in either the local language of the office you are applying for or in English. You need to be business fluent in both and ready to interview in either language. Do not hesitate to ask your recruiter in advance about the language of the interview.

Are you looking for different things (or a different bar) for BA vs Associate etc.?

We are looking for qualities like personal impact, entrepreneurial drive, problem-solving skills, and leadership abilities in all of our candidates. Depending on the role you apply for, we will focus on different aspects of your knowledge or abilities. Most of them are stated in the respective job descriptions, and you will receive further and more detailed information on your individual process from your recruiter.

Are there any group cases?

Not unless specifically indicated by your recruiter.



Are there any video/webex interviews instead of phone interview? (what tips can you give for that?)

Our video/webex interviews are very sophisticated and not too different from phone interviews. Be extra specific about your work by showing the interviewer your notes and try to use your visibility to your advantage.

Can I get a copy of the webex deck?

For EMEA candidates who take the feedback survey after the presentation, there is additional coaching material available to download at the end.

Does everyone get a coaching call? Am I getting one? Why don't I get one?

Reach out to your recruiter to see if you will have one provided.

Should I bring a resume / notepad / calculator?

You will not be able to use your calculator during the interviews. Please bring paper for notes, and you are welcome to bring some water and a watch to keep time.

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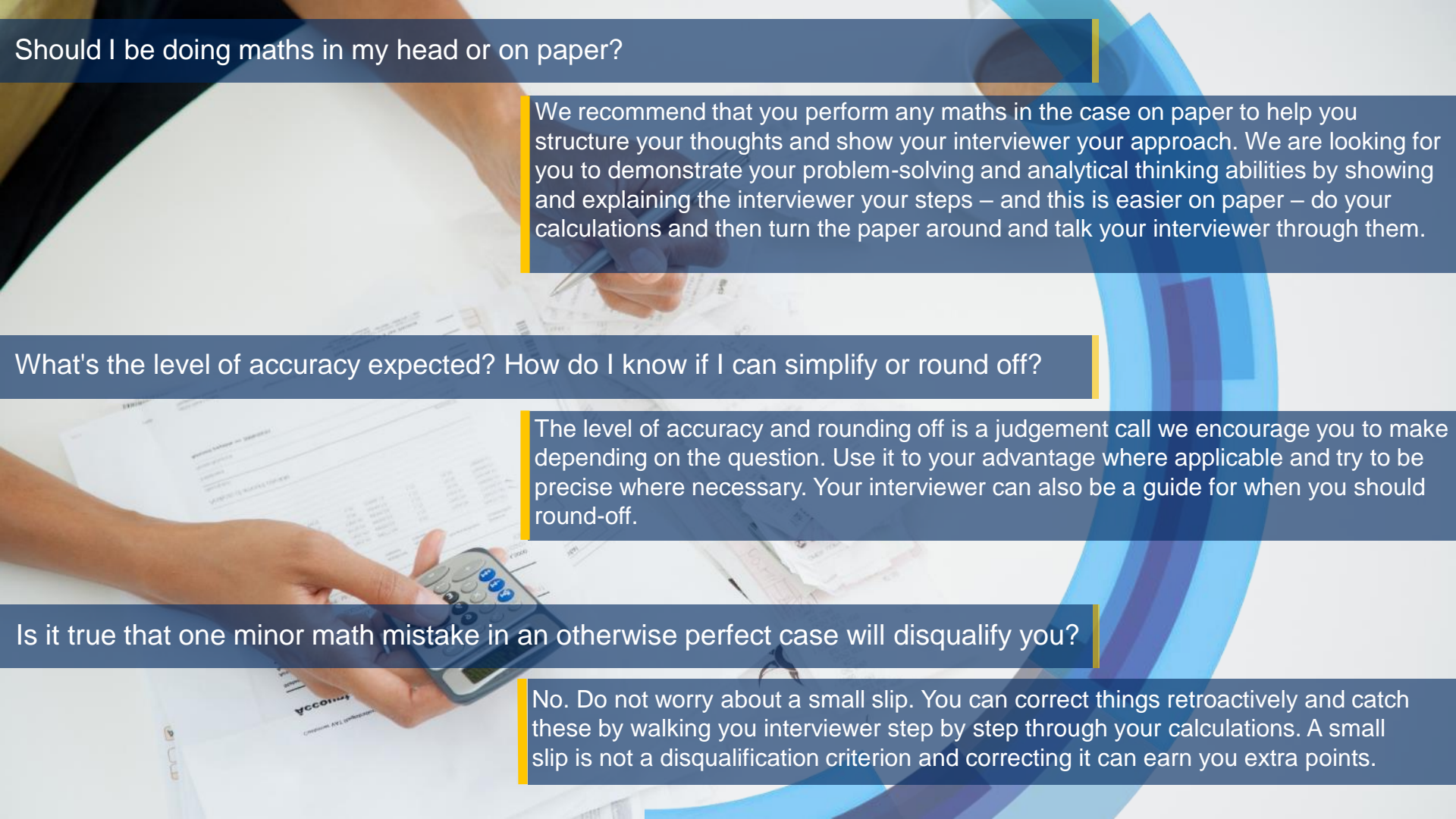
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Should I be doing maths in my head or on paper?

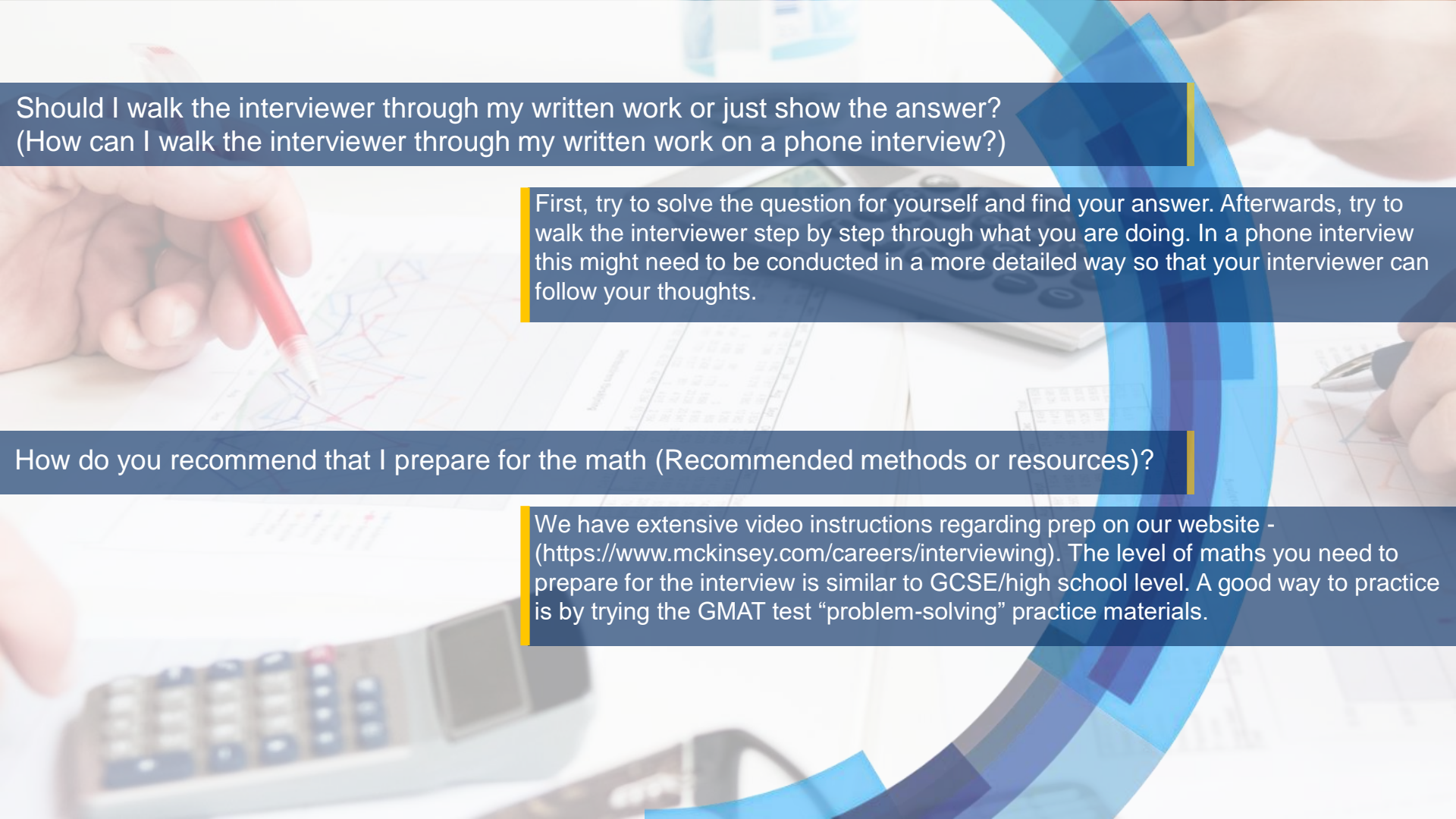
We recommend that you perform any maths in the case on paper to help you structure your thoughts and show your interviewer your approach. We are looking for you to demonstrate your problem-solving and analytical thinking abilities by showing and explaining the interviewer your steps – and this is easier on paper – do your calculations and then turn the paper around and talk your interviewer through them.

What's the level of accuracy expected? How do I know if I can simplify or round off?

The level of accuracy and rounding off is a judgement call we encourage you to make depending on the question. Use it to your advantage where applicable and try to be precise where necessary. Your interviewer can also be a guide for when you should round-off.

Is it true that one minor math mistake in an otherwise perfect case will disqualify you?

No. Do not worry about a small slip. You can correct things retroactively and catch these by walking you interviewer step by step through your calculations. A small slip is not a disqualification criterion and correcting it can earn you extra points.



Should I walk the interviewer through my written work or just show the answer?
(How can I walk the interviewer through my written work on a phone interview?)

First, try to solve the question for yourself and find your answer. Afterwards, try to walk the interviewer step by step through what you are doing. In a phone interview this might need to be conducted in a more detailed way so that your interviewer can follow your thoughts.

How do you recommend that I prepare for the math (Recommended methods or resources)?

We have extensive video instructions regarding prep on our website - (<https://www.mckinsey.com/careers/interviewing>). The level of maths you need to prepare for the interview is similar to GCSE/high school level. A good way to practice is by trying the GMAT test “problem-solving” practice materials.

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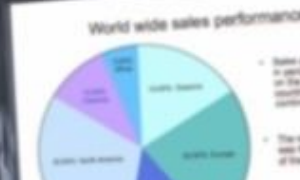
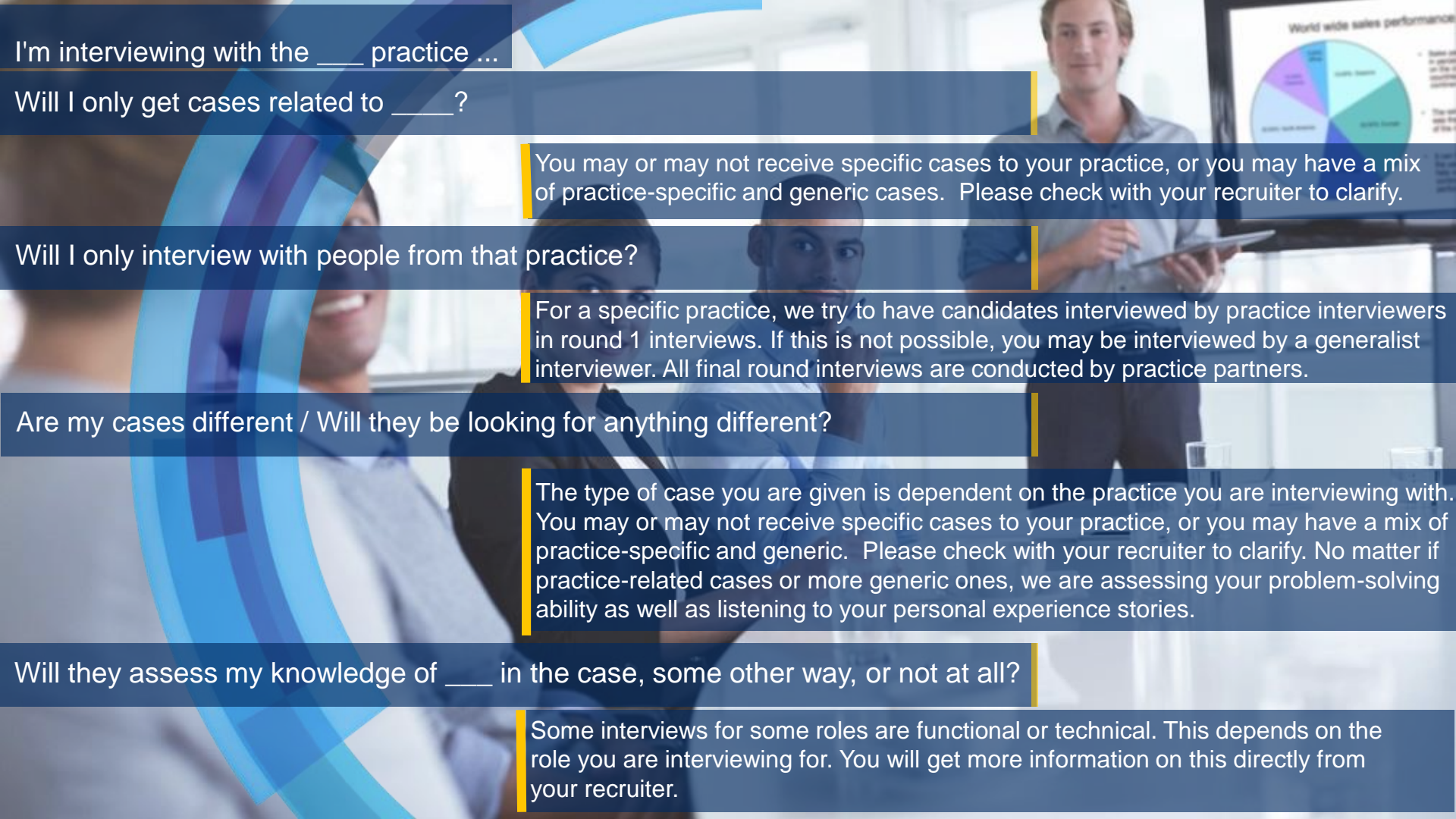
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I'm interviewing with the ____ practice ...

Will I only get cases related to ____?

You may or may not receive specific cases to your practice, or you may have a mix of practice-specific and generic cases. Please check with your recruiter to clarify.

Will I only interview with people from that practice?

For a specific practice, we try to have candidates interviewed by practice interviewers in round 1 interviews. If this is not possible, you may be interviewed by a generalist interviewer. All final round interviews are conducted by practice partners.

Are my cases different / Will they be looking for anything different?

The type of case you are given is dependent on the practice you are interviewing with. You may or may not receive specific cases to your practice, or you may have a mix of practice-specific and generic. Please check with your recruiter to clarify. No matter if practice-related cases or more generic ones, we are assessing your problem-solving ability as well as listening to your personal experience stories.

Will they assess my knowledge of ____ in the case, some other way, or not at all?

Some interviews for some roles are functional or technical. This depends on the role you are interviewing for. You will get more information on this directly from your recruiter.

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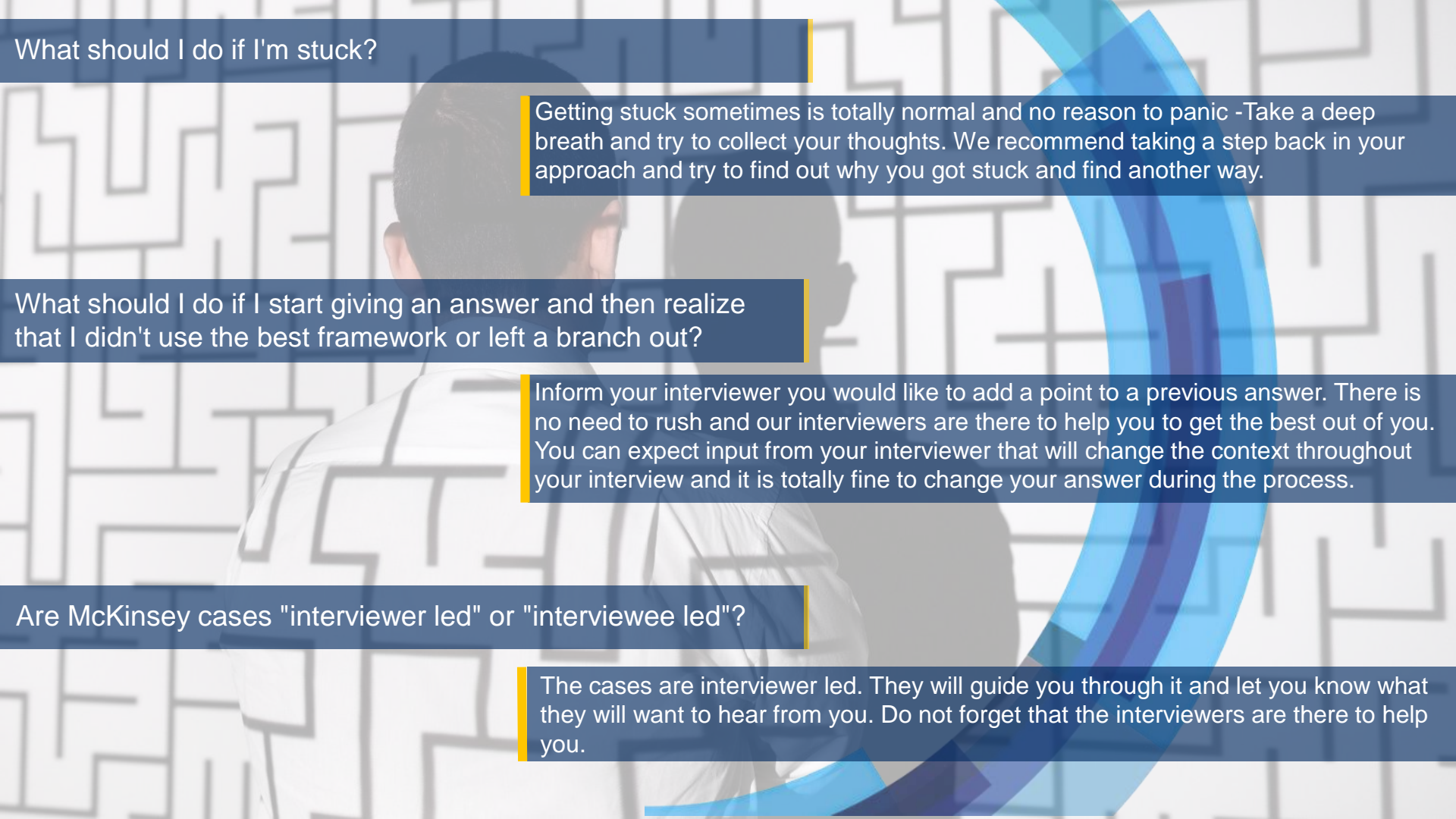
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What should I do if I'm stuck?

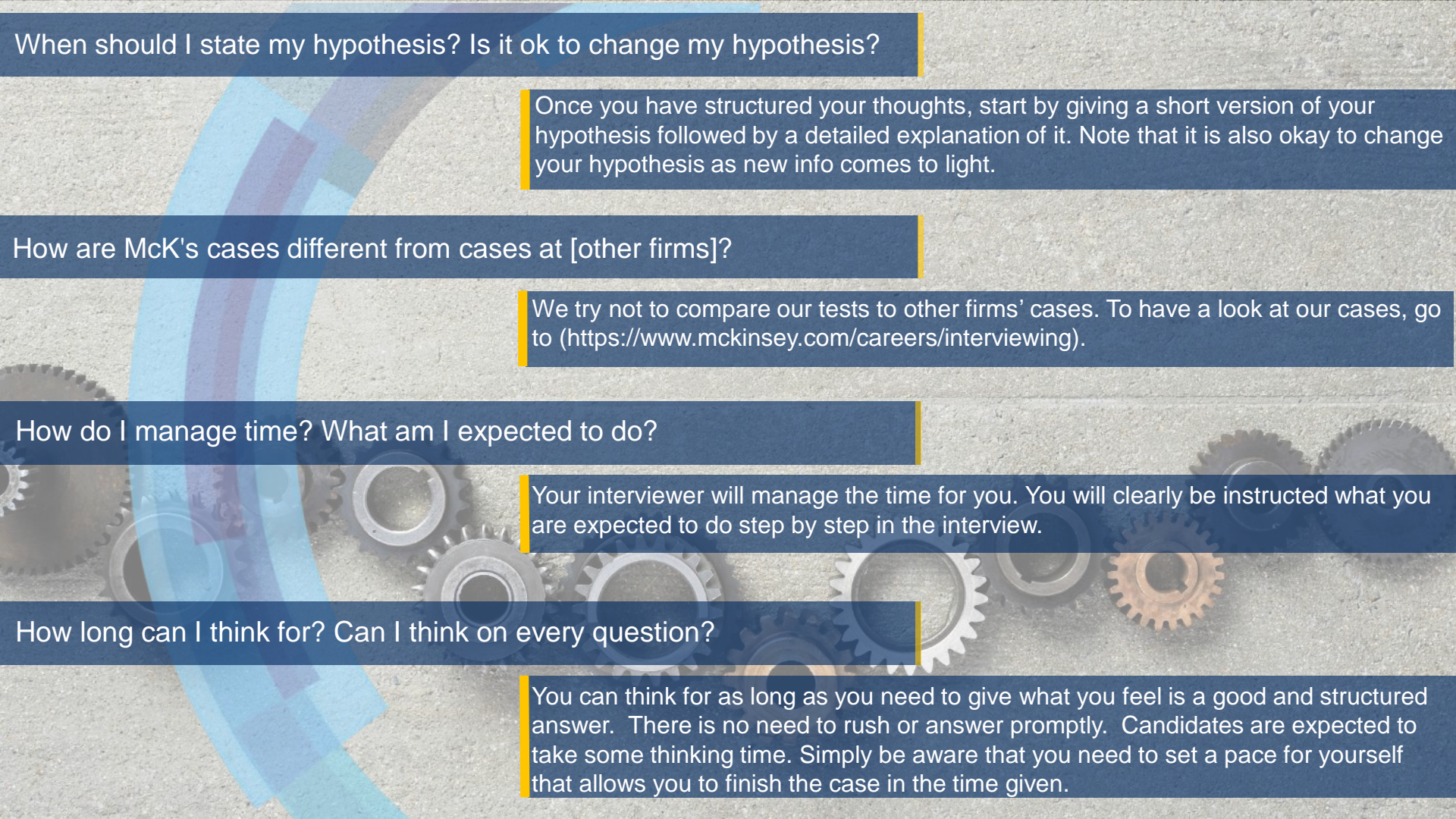
Getting stuck sometimes is totally normal and no reason to panic -Take a deep breath and try to collect your thoughts. We recommend taking a step back in your approach and try to find out why you got stuck and find another way.

What should I do if I start giving an answer and then realize that I didn't use the best framework or left a branch out?

Inform your interviewer you would like to add a point to a previous answer. There is no need to rush and our interviewers are there to help you to get the best out of you. You can expect input from your interviewer that will change the context throughout your interview and it is totally fine to change your answer during the process.

Are McKinsey cases "interviewer led" or "interviewee led"?

The cases are interviewer led. They will guide you through it and let you know what they will want to hear from you. Do not forget that the interviewers are there to help you.



When should I state my hypothesis? Is it ok to change my hypothesis?

Once you have structured your thoughts, start by giving a short version of your hypothesis followed by a detailed explanation of it. Note that it is also okay to change your hypothesis as new info comes to light.

How are McK's cases different from cases at [other firms]?

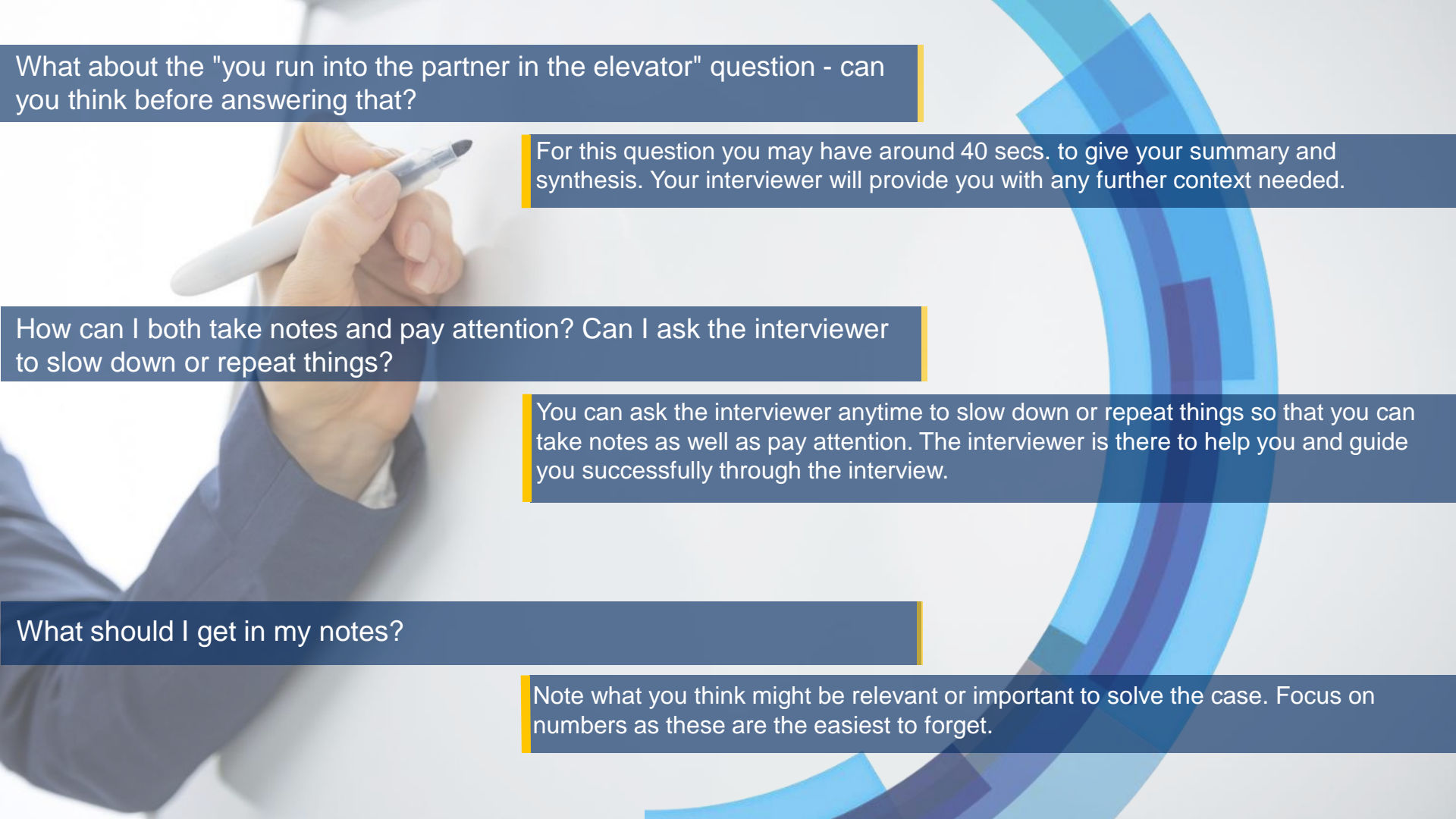
We try not to compare our tests to other firms' cases. To have a look at our cases, go to (<https://www.mckinsey.com/careers/interviewing>).

How do I manage time? What am I expected to do?

Your interviewer will manage the time for you. You will clearly be instructed what you are expected to do step by step in the interview.

How long can I think for? Can I think on every question?

You can think for as long as you need to give what you feel is a good and structured answer. There is no need to rush or answer promptly. Candidates are expected to take some thinking time. Simply be aware that you need to set a pace for yourself that allows you to finish the case in the time given.



What about the "you run into the partner in the elevator" question - can you think before answering that?

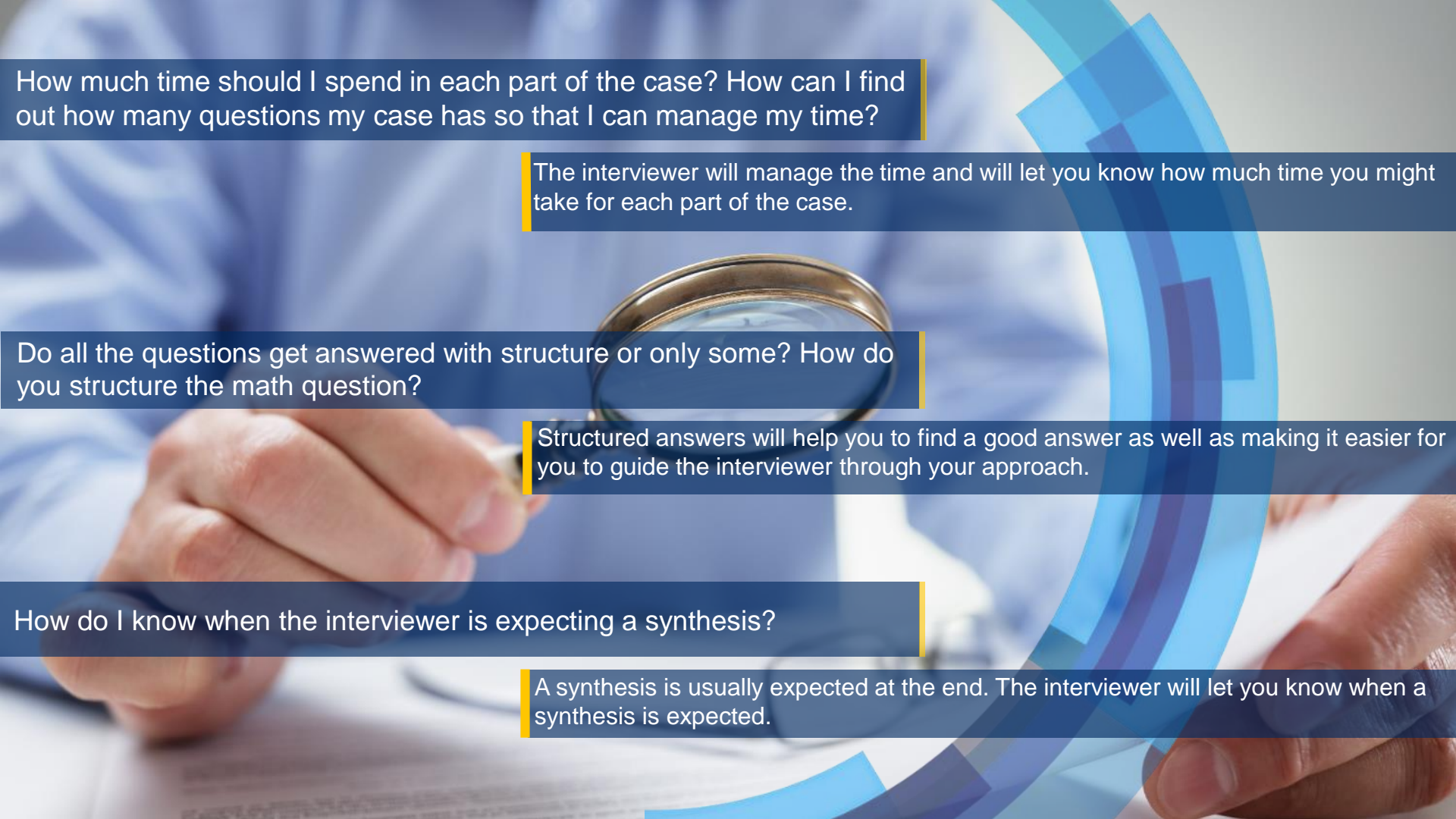
For this question you may have around 40 secs. to give your summary and synthesis. Your interviewer will provide you with any further context needed.

How can I both take notes and pay attention? Can I ask the interviewer to slow down or repeat things?

You can ask the interviewer anytime to slow down or repeat things so that you can take notes as well as pay attention. The interviewer is there to help you and guide you successfully through the interview.

What should I get in my notes?

Note what you think might be relevant or important to solve the case. Focus on numbers as these are the easiest to forget.



How much time should I spend in each part of the case? How can I find out how many questions my case has so that I can manage my time?


The interviewer will manage the time and will let you know how much time you might take for each part of the case.

Do all the questions get answered with structure or only some? How do you structure the math question?

Structured answers will help you to find a good answer as well as making it easier for you to guide the interviewer through your approach.

How do I know when the interviewer is expecting a synthesis?

A synthesis is usually expected at the end. The interviewer will let you know when a synthesis is expected.



How is the case scored? Are all the questions worth the same?
How much is the maths worth compared to the rest of the case?

We use the interviews to look at your overall performance and get a picture of your general way of problem-solving and how you approach different assignments and situations. Different parts of your interview may be weighted differently depending on the role you apply for.

How should I present written materials to interviewer? (how best to, what if my handwriting is messy, is it ok to abbreviate, ...)

Be yourself and present the way that works best for you. When using abbreviations make sure you have defined them. If you have messy handwriting make sure you can read it yourself so you can explain and present your answers. The way you present written material should represent yourself and be conducted in a way you feel comfortable with.